

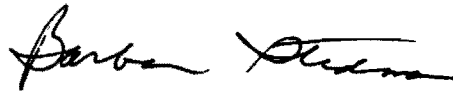
**Coalition of Student Advocates**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Jennifer Shea

Dr. Barb Stedman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barb Stedman", written in a cursive style.

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Coalition of Student Advocates  
Honors Thesis 499  
Jennifer K. Shea

Abstract

The need to increase opportunities for students to engage in political and civic action prompted three students (Jennifer Shea, Amber Michel and Betsy Mills) to form the Coalition of Student Advocates (CSA). The first goal of the organization is to encourage civic involvement among the students at Ball State University through events focusing on current political and social issues. The second goal is to organize discussions, focus groups, and events focusing on issues concerning Ball State students, and to provide an arena for networking and resource sharing (i.e. articles, websites, etc.) to Ball State students. The third goal of CSA is to advance student awareness and involvement in current political and social issues. CSA hosted the BSU Letter Writing Campaign as its inaugural campus-wide event, bringing together more than 70 attendees to discuss current issues and to relay their concerns through letter writing. The event yielded 144 letters sent to state and federal members of Congress and marked the beginning of a tradition of civic awareness at Ball State.

Acknowledgements

- I am extremely grateful to Amber and Betsy, my project partners, for their efforts and encouragement.
- Thank you to Barb Stedman for her invaluable advice and support throughout the planning process.
- I am grateful to the Honors College for giving me the opportunity to direct my own learning to a field that is very personal and important to me.
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- I would also like to thank Chris French for his work as photographer at the event.

## **Introduction**

Members of the “millennial” generation (people born from 1980-2000) are known for their idealism and “heir enthusiasm.” Raised by Baby Boomer parents who were greatly involved in their children’s lives – everything from challenging poor grades to arguing for more playing time on the soccer team to filling out college applications – these young people feel invincible as a result. While this trait might present challenges as they enter the working world and interact with their Generation X superiors, the attitudes and values of the millennials show that they are civically minded, inclusive and optimistic about the future (Raines). In fact, a 2007 study produced by The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) found that members of the millennial generation participate in political and civic activities at a higher rate than their Gen-X predecessors (Kiesa 4).

At college campuses across the country, this sense of civic responsibility has fostered the growth of student volunteerism, action in political campaigns and participation in causes concerned with global issues. At Ball State University, organizations such as Student Voluntary Services and events like Relay for Life, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, have grown in popularity. The current political atmosphere evokes strong passions among young people who want to take action, with the United States engaged in a costly and controversial war and stories about human genocide in Africa appearing on the front pages of newspapers. Issues such as healthcare, the environment, access to education and personal liberties are at the front of many students’ minds. For these reasons, my project partners, Amber Michel and Betsy Mills, and I established the Coalition of Student Advocates to provide students with a platform for expressing their views persuasively through an effective form of activism.

### **Need for the Project**

A college campus is an environment of great activity, with many individuals gathered in classrooms, in meeting spaces and at large events to achieve a variety of goals. All pursue academic growth and intellectual stimulation; many appreciate the social opportunities; people learn how to work together and communicate with each other. Some, while balancing all of the demands of completing a college degree, look outside of the university to issues affecting the wider community, at local, state, national and international levels. These individuals benefit from the active nature of the college campus: they have a captive audience and can reach a large number of people easily to promote their cause. They also face challenges, such as the copious number of options for students and professors, who have limited amounts of free time. Communication is challenging because while there are numerous ways to reach large numbers of people (flyers, e-mail, newspaper, radio, TV, etc.), there are also many other groups competing for attention. The number of organizations vying for students' attention was so great that students were getting inundated with mass e-mails. In response, the Office of Student Life at Ball State limited the number mass e-mails from student organizations, sending one e-mail each week that gives information about all of the events happening on campus.

The number of socially and politically active student organizations is growing. In the 2007-2008 school year, three new organizations were established, each with a unique cause to promote and each one struggling to attract attention and involvement from the student body. While each group's specific focus is different, they share the goal of raising awareness about their cause on campus and motivating students to act. For the reasons stated above, these organizations would benefit from partnerships and support from other student groups to build strong foundations. New groups could learn from established organizations about the

best way to reach students, which locations on campus are best for certain types of events and how to utilize the resources of the Student Government Association. Until now, the student organizations with a social justice focus were limited to using their personal connections to forge partnerships with other student groups. In many cases, groups remained isolated in their own causes and passed up the opportunity to work collectively with other groups. The result was a list of organizations with varying levels of success in membership and awareness on campus. This lack of unity among social justice groups created a divided front, with many organizations competing for the same pool of concerned students. These groups also compete for resources, including advisors, publicity and time as they struggle to schedule events on a weekend or weeknight not occupied by another organization's event. This kind of competition weakens the effectiveness of social and political groups at Ball State, and the solution is to form a coalition of these groups to share ideas and strengthen each group's presence on campus.

### **A New Student Organization**

The Coalition of Student Advocates aims to bring an end to the competition by establishing communication among socially active groups. The constitution of CSA lists the following organizations goals:

- To encourage civic involvement among the students at Ball State University through events focusing on current political and social issues.
- To organize discussions, focus groups, and events focusing on issues concerning Ball State students.
- To provide an arena for networking and resource sharing (e.g., articles, websites, etc.) to Ball State students to advance their awareness and involvement in current political and social issues.

Comprised of members of other established organizations, CSA provides a forum for discussion, partnerships and support. As the founders of CSA, we envisioned campus leaders meeting once a month or three times a semester to share ideas, to inform one another of upcoming events and to solicit volunteers and attendees at their events.

We knew the best way to start the group was to register CSA as a recognized student organization. First, student organizations are eligible to receive funding from the Campus Activity Fund Board (CAFB) and the Student Government Association (SGA). In addition, only official student organizations are administered Ball State e-mail accounts and are featured in the Pride Guide, the annual publication of campus groups. In order to become a student organization, Amber Michel drafted the group's constitution. This involved outlining the organization's purpose (the three objectives are listed above), creating officer positions and outlining the role of each, outlining meeting guidelines and setting the provisions for creating amendments to the constitution. After submitting the proposal, Amber was asked to clarify the group's purpose and defend its uniqueness compared to existing student groups. On December 7, 2007, we received notification by mail that CSA had been approved as a Ball State student organization.

### **The Inaugural Event**

We wanted CSA to start off strong by making an impact on campus, and we felt a letter-writing campaign would bring together students and groups from across the political and social spectrum to voice their concerns on a variety of issues. The event would be an exercise in political activism that nurtured the passionate and inquisitive nature of student activists. We felt that writing letters to governmental representatives would give students an

easy and concrete way to contribute to a cause of their choice. The vision for a letter-writing campaign was born from our personal and professional experiences with advocacy and government. Letter writing is one of the most familiar forms of advocacy, one that is both effective and easy to perform. Amber worked as an intern at the Indiana State House and saw state Representatives record the opinions that constituents expressed in their letters to help form a stance on policies and legislation. I had written letters for numerous causes and was familiar with advocacy after shadowing a lobbyist in Lansing, Michigan. Betsy is politically active on many levels and has a special interest in increasing student involvement after serving for a year as the President of the Student Government Association. We all agreed that letter writing also provides activists with a platform for expressing their views by constructing an argument and deciding how to present it effectively. As an exercise in advocacy, writing letters is a suitable fit for the type of event CSA hoped to host in an academic setting.

Our vision for the event was to encourage all types of activism on various social issues. One of the key components of the event would be the role students would play in facilitating the letter-writing groups. We designed the peer-led discussion groups to promote collaboration, debate and benefitting from one another's backgrounds and experiences. The event was intended to bring students together from across the political spectrum to emphasize the relational aspects of advocacy at the grassroots level. Every decision we made in preparation for the event was based on the goal to capitalize on different students' expertise to encourage grassroots advocacy on campus.

The non-partisan and participant-directed nature of the event fits perfectly with the needs and interests of the millennial generation. The CIRCLE study found that participants want to have experiences that provide "authentic opportunities for discussing political issues"

(Kiesa 4). They prefer open debates over partisan discussions. The study goes on to explain that students are turned off by political debates that are polarized and view an issue as black-or-white. Rather, students prefer to find a compromise and to explore the nuance of an issue. This is precisely the kind of experience we created at the letter-writing campaign: one where students direct the conversation, entertain multiple viewpoints and select the best persuasive points from a large array of options. Our selection of the topics that would be discussed at the event also allowed students this freedom while providing enough direction and resources to compose strong letters.

### **Selection of Discussion Topics**

The issues we chose to be the topics of the letters written at the event were selected for a variety of reasons. The selection process began when we met with eight student leaders involved in advocacy on campus. The goal of the meeting was to secure student facilitators for the discussion groups, enlist organizations to become members of CSA and get help in promoting the event. Two students immediately stepped forward to act as facilitators. Alyce Householter is the founder of the Ball State chapter of STAND, an anti-genocide student coalition. Jacque Wilson is a proponent of the Student Free Press Act in Indiana, a bill that she helped draft. From these two invested partners came the first two topics: human rights and student rights.

The topic of human rights has come to the forefront of student awareness because of the genocide taking place in the Darfur region of Sudan. Since the US labeled Darfur a genocide situation three and a half years ago, college students across the country have created groups dedicated to educating people about the genocide and lobbying to political



representatives to take action. STAND is one such student organization, with 700 chapters around the United States. STAND is a student anti-genocide coalition partnered with the Genocide Intervention network (STAND Now). Many students are moved by the compelling statistics about human suffering in Darfur: over 450,000 have died so far and nearly 2.5 million people are refugees and internally displaced persons. STAND created a presentation for chapters to use to spread awareness of the issue. In it, chapter leaders compare the number of refugees or deaths to the populations in their city or state. This kind of perspective moves people to action by calling on corporations, communities, governments and even their own universities to take a stand against genocide by cutting off financial aid to the government that inflicts it, a process also known as divestment. Alyce Householter, along with fellow students Amanda Glad and David Spooner, founded the Ball State chapter of STAND during the 2007-2008 school year. Alyce and the other leaders saw the Coalition of Student Advocates as the ideal resource to help them establish a strong following for their organization. The letter-writing campaign provided Alyce, Amanda and David a chance to practice delivering their message to increase awareness about genocide and ways that students can contribute to the cause.

Jacque Wilson, an Honors College senior, is the author of the Student Free Press bill which she drafted and advocated for her Honors thesis. While student press rights was not something that any of the three of us had originally anticipated including, Jacque's knowledge and passion for the subject, along with its relevance to the student body, made it a natural choice. According to the Web site Jacque created for her thesis, she and three other members of the Indiana Collegiate Press Association wrote a revision of a previous act. The revision was written in response to a ruling made by appellate judges in the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court (covering the states of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin) that granted college administrators the

right to censor material published in a college newspaper (Student Free Press Act). The topic relates to issues of expression in an academic setting and the freedoms that should be guaranteed to students at the college level. The topic poses interesting questions about freedom of expression and encourages students to critically examine the role the administration plays in determining the messages that appear on campus. Careful critique of the university's policies and functions are necessary for Ball State to continue to improve the student experience. Jacque and the rest of her committee are making real changes at the state level, and involving her project in our event creates the perfect setting for encouraging other students to participate in their own way.

Poverty is a salient issue at Ball State. Events such as the poverty simulations hosted by the Social Work Department illustrate the importance of the issue at the local level. Members of the Muncie community come to campus for these events to share their experiences with poverty, a prevalent issue in the city. The current economic conditions in Muncie and in the United States in general put a strain on the government, businesses and individuals by aggravating the challenges related to poverty. The 2004 statistics on poverty in Delaware County indicate a poverty rate of 15.3%, a figure 3.4% above the 2004 national average and rating second in the state of Indiana (STATS, NPC). The local nature of poverty and the strong voice of academic programs at Ball State focused on these issues made poverty a fitting issue of focus at the letter-writing campaign.

Environmental issues are also of paramount concern, as humans face a pivotal window of opportunity to slow the destruction caused by our activity. The popularity of environmental issues became apparent with the release of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* in 2006. The focus has become a top issue in the 2008 presidential campaign. As scientific

evidence compels discussion of the warning signs and the already apparent negative impacts of human activity, governments, communities and individuals find themselves facing problems brought on by past behaviors. It is becoming clearer that drastic changes must be made on all at each level. Although environmental legislation has slowly been introduced in the state and on Capitol Hill, it is still not enough to adequately slow the deterioration of natural resources that is already underway. At Ball State, Students for a Sustainable Campus and the Natural Resources Club (among others) are leading the cause to improve the university's environmental awareness and decrease its harmful impacts. The university has taken some steps to decrease its ecological footprint: the shuttle buses run on biodiesel fuel, the new buildings on campus are all LEED-certified and the campus recycling program has been improved in recent years (Barker 3). The incredible need for these and many more actions made environmental issues another obvious choice as a topic for the letter-writing campaign.

Amber, Betsy and I have all been involved in some way with advocating diversity, and our personal interests compelled us to include diversity in the list of issues at the letter-writing campaign. Amber is a past president of Spectrum, the GLBTQSA organization on campus, and Betsy and I have both been involved in that group and in advocating legislation that protects the rights of same-sex couples. The multicultural organizations on campus are some of the largest and most thriving. This is evidence of the value students hold on promoting acceptance and exploring differences with intellect and open-mindedness. Resources like the Multicultural Advisors (student employees who promote diversity education in the residence halls) enhance students' experiences with diversity on campus. The wide breadth of issues related to diversity – immigration, employment, equal rights, and

many others – also made diversity an obvious choice for the event, because participants would choose which topic they wanted as the focus of their letter.

Although it was difficult for us to choose just one issue within diversity to focus on, we knew that the importance of diversity in higher education is monumental. College is a time for students from all backgrounds and of all ages to expand their knowledge of other people, to examine their preconceptions and to learn how to function in a diverse world. Responding to and embracing diversity is a kind of education that college students will draw on for the rest of their lives. Fairleigh Dickinson University lists the benefits of incorporating diversity into the academic discourse as promoting a healthy society, strengthening communities and workplaces, enriching the educational experience and enhancing America's economic competitiveness ("The Importance of Diversity"). For these and many other reasons, diversity was both a practical and necessary choice for the final topic for the letter-writing campaign.

The topics of student rights and human rights came to the event with student facilitators guaranteed. For the other topics, we used mostly personal contacts to find other students to get involved. Such was the case for recruiting Zac Davis, a prominent student leader in diversity, and Stephanie Carter, a social work major, as student facilitators. When that strategy failed to secure us with a facilitator for the environment group, we used the rosters of student organizations and suggestions from faculty to find someone to fill the spot. Finally, with the recommendation of Barb Stedman, our advisor and active environmental advocate, we contacted recent Ball State graduate Nada Roumie to lead the environmental discussion.

Once all of the facilitators were recruited, another challenge was narrowing the intentionally broad topics to give the groups direction while still allowing them the freedom to direct the conversations themselves. To help the facilitators, Amber and Betsy created fact sheets about the topics that featured statistics, trends and talking points to supplement the facilitators' knowledge as they led the discussion.

The process for selecting the topics and facilitators for the event was subjective in that it was based on the coordinators' experiences and viewpoints. The early selection of the topics was necessary in order to secure facilitators and to promote the event. It is worthy to note that some of the topics have liberal leanings. For example, genocide and diversity are typically leftist topics. National security, the military and the economy are two topics characteristic of a conservative viewpoint and these topics did not fit neatly into any of the topics we selected. One way to combat this bias in the future would be to survey people interested in the event about the issues they are most concerned about to tailor the event to the people who attend.

Once promotion of the event began, I surveyed 22 students in my Peace Studies class to find out what issues concerned them most. The top answers were human rights and the environment. "Human rights" includes genocide and human trafficking. Environmental concerns that the students specified include global warming, resource management, deforestation, green energy, pollution and recycling. Other popular issues were health, poverty, education and social justice (including institutional racism, sexism, equal rights and gay rights). Luckily, these topics fit into the five topics at the event and are broad enough to cover the wide array of topics within each category. Despite the fact that we chose the topics based on our individual outlooks, I am confident that we chose topics that would interest and

excite the event participants to move them to action. The outcome of the event, which will be discussed later, demonstrates the validity of our selections.

### **Event Speakers and Logistics**

Our goals while planning the rest of the details for the event were simple: create a simple, fun experience for students who want to meet people who share their passion for social issues. In the early planning stages, we thought the event might be outdoors and feature a live band. Eventually it moved to an indoor event focused more on discussion than entertainment. Since the letters at the event were directed to members of the Indiana State and Federal Congress, I invited all of the representatives in Muncie to speak at the event about the importance of advocacy and how letter writing impacts their policies. I also invited a member of the Citizens Action Coalition (CAC), a statewide advocacy agency, to speak about effective methods for students to voice their beliefs. Luckily, federal Congressman Mike Pence and State Senator Sue Errington agreed to speak at the event, along with Dave Menzer, the renewable energy specialist from CAC. Once the speakers confirmed, I felt that the event truly was bi-partisan. Participants would not only learn about advocacy, they would also have the opportunity to speak with their state and federal representatives personally.

The requirements for the event location were minimal. The ideal space would have room for 100 people to sit at tables, space to make a presentation, a sound system for the guest speakers and a little extra room for food. We also wanted a space where students would feel comfortable to talk with each other. The ballroom in the Fine Arts Building was the perfect location. In addition to meeting all of the above criteria, we could serve our own food rather than purchase food through University Catering.

We envisioned a four-hour event to accommodate the guest speakers, give ample time to discuss the topics and compose the letters, eat lunch while the letters were printed and then address the letters. Saturday seemed like the best option, but as we expected we had difficulty finding a weekend not already booked with other campus events. We chose April 12 for its placement between Spring Break and the end of the semester. There were also minimal conflicts with Greek or sporting events that weekend.

Once we determined the topics, date, location, guest speakers and agenda for the event, the rest of the planning and logistical details fell into place. Amber arranged for University Computing Services (UCS) to print the letters for us during lunch. Betsy secured full funding for the event through co-sponsorship with the Student Government Association. We began promoting the event by contacting student organizations that we thought would be interested in our event, and Betsy scheduled personal visits with most of them.

Approximately two weeks before the event, a great opportunity came my way. I was enrolled in an Introduction to Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution course. One of the course components was a service learning project that the class would work on outside of the class meeting time. The original project that the instructor, Doris Kirkpatrick, planned to use unexpectedly fell through late in the semester. Alyce Householter, the founder of the Ball State STAND group and one of the event facilitators, suggested that the class help with our project. The instructor and I agreed that the class would help promote the event. She set up a discussion board on Blackboard that I used to give my class ways they could help with the event. We split the class into three committees: publicity, promotions and event volunteers. The publicity team was responsible for contacting campus media to gain coverage of the event. Sarah Sampson, a public relations major, chaired that committee. The promotions committee hung fliers and spoke to their classes about the event. The event volunteers helped

set up and clean up the event on April 12. The 27-member class also acted as a focus group to gauge which topics concerned students and to get feedback after the event. The results of the class's evaluation of the event will be covered in the "Event Outcome and Impact" section.

The three months leading up to the event were filled with activity for each of us as event coordinators. Amber handled logistics, Betsy talked with student groups and I managed much of the communication with the guest speakers, student facilitators and various department chairs to raise awareness about the event. All of the planning was going smoothly and people were responding positively to our explanation of the event. A week and a half before the event, we learned about two events that were scheduled for the day of our event that caused us to change our plans considerably.

### **Unexpected Challenges**

One of our strongest events partners from early on in the process was Ngofeen Mputubwele, a senior Honors student involved with Invisible Children, a campaign focused on the maltreatment of children in northern Uganda. Ngofeen's project involved bringing the Displace Me event to Ball State. A few weeks before our event, Ngofeen informed me that his event was scheduled for April 11, the day before our event. We knew this meant we would lose one of our strongest partners and many participants, since the objectives of our event and of Displace Me are so similar. We also knew that the event was an important one, and since Ngofeen is a member of CSA, we helped promote his event in the materials we made to promote the letter-writing campaign.



A great test of that resolve came one week before our event when we learned that Senator Barack Obama, candidate for the Democratic nomination for President, scheduled a visit to Ball State's campus on April 12. My initial reaction was to find a way to incorporate our event into the political rally. People were bound to be inspired by Senator Obama's message to take action, and our event would provide them with that opportunity. After a day of phone calls and e-mails to Senator Obama's campaign, it became clear that we would have to adjust on our own and not rely on Senator Obama to promote the event.

After much deliberation, we decided to move the starting time of the event to the afternoon after Senator Obama's speech. Unfortunately this meant that Congressman Pence could not speak at the event, but he sent a statement for us to read about the importance of people communicating with their political representatives. Congressman Pence assured us that he would be willing to speak at future events for CSA. Senator Errington and Dave Menzer were both able to accommodate the time change.

With the new start time and one fewer guest speaker, we decided to reduce the event to three hours. Our speakers arrived later than we expected, so the event began about 20 minutes late. The speakers were phenomenal. The audience was interested in Dave Menzer's knowledgeable stance on renewable energy and legislation related to it. Senator Errington impressed everyone with her presentation on how to write an effective letter to members of Congress. She even provided a handout that included examples of both good and bad letters she had received. Everyone appreciated her input and the participants had many questions for her.

Once we began writing the letters, it was clear that we had hit on the interests of the student body. People quickly chose their topics and each group had six to eight people,

indicating that each topic interested students. As I listened to each group, I heard valuable information being given by the facilitators, great questions and discussion by the participants, and many issues listed as possible topics for the letters. Robert Burgess, a political science major, helped the groups decide to whom their letters should be directed. The groups worked for a full hour and were so invested in writing their letters that they were unaware when the pizza arrived.

It was at this point that we ran into a timing challenge. The groups needed more time to complete their letters, but the longer they took, the less time we had to print the letters. We decided to extend the length of the event so that the groups could complete the letters. While the letters were printed, participants talked, ate pizza and watched School House Rock videos. We were concerned about asking people to stay later than we had planned, but while some people left early, many remained to sign and address the letters. It was a good compromise for a difficult situation.

Overall, I am very proud of our response to all of the challenges that arose before and during the event. Amber, Betsy and I remained calm and adjusted our plans accordingly. This was a great exercise in patience, problem solving and team work. I have planned other events that ran into challenges and I find that the success of the event depends on how the leaders handle difficulties. I believe we succeeded in our original goal to increase civic engagement by providing students with an opportunity to contribute to a variety of causes through discussion and education from their peers.

### **Event Outcome and Impact**

We estimate that throughout the day 70 people attended the event. We mailed a total of 144 letters. We are sending a link to the letter documents to every event participant so that even those who left early can send the letters. We fell short of our 1,000 letter goal, but for a first-time event we accomplished a great deal. The participants were pleased with the letters they produced and many people said they enjoyed meeting in the small groups to write the letters. I trust that the letters will make an impact on the recipients and will demonstrate college students' interests in political and social affairs.

I surveyed the Peace Studies class after the event to gauge their perceptions of the event. The survey was designed for people who had attended the event and people who had not so that we could determine ways to strengthen the event and increase attendance for next year. When asked to rate the quality of the guest speakers, the participants gave consistently high marks for an average of 8.6 out of 10. The students rated the letter-writing process at 7.6 and the overall experience at 8.5. It was interesting to note that 50% of students thought the length of the event was just right despite the time crunch and 61% said they would be just as likely to attend the event if the letters were e-mailed instead of printed and mailed by post. When asked if they would be more likely to attend the event if it were on a weekday, the group was evenly divided, with one third saying they would be more likely to attend, one third were less likely and the remaining third responded that it would be about the same. The most common suggestion for improvement was to lengthen the time allotted to write the letters and provide more information prior to the event so that participants could prepare with research prior to the event. I was pleased to learn that people wanted to invest themselves further in the process and hope that this means a strong participant pool for next year.

At the conclusion of the event, we asked for volunteers who were interested in participating in CSA or the letter-writing campaign next year. Three people volunteered and an additional student in my Peace Studies class expressed interest. Amber, Betsy and I will meet with these people to talk about the event and pass on all of the materials and information we used to host the inaugural event. We will provide recommendations on how to strengthen the event next year, such as allotting more time for the letter writing, scheduling the guest speakers well in advance and improving communication with event participants prior to the event. I predict that CSA will serve a necessary function to unite students concerned with social justice on campus and uphold an excellent tradition of civic engagement at Ball State.

### **Conclusion**

From this experience I learned a great deal about grassroots organizing. I witnessed the primary importance of strong communication, organization and partnering to achieve a worthwhile goal. I learned that college students are passionate about issues outside of their own experience and that they simply need encouragement and opportunities to express themselves to make positive changes. I learned that I work best with a clear set of expectation and goals and that I have strengths in creating a strategy to meet those goals. I found that I struggle to follow through when dealing with large amounts of information, such as producing fact sheets for the student facilitators or managing the database of recipients. I learned about management when I organized the volunteer work of 23 students in my Peace Studies class.

The best lesson I learned during my thesis project was the power that a small, committed group of individuals has to make an impact. Amber, Betsy and I were the sole planners of the event, and the product of our work was an experience in advocacy for up to 70 students. We bridged the communication gap between college students and politicians and we helped to send more than 100 letters advocating positive social change. We added to the political and social discourse on campus and we let the entire campus know that we care about the world outside of the campus. I feel equipped now to run a grassroots campaign, and in fact I plan to pursue a career that somehow incorporates community organizing.

Throughout the event organizing, I kept Margaret Mead's words close to my heart: "Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed citizens to change the world. Indeed, it has never been done otherwise."

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Coalition of Student Advocates  
Honors Thesis 499  
Jennifer K. Shea

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# CONSTITUTION OF THE COALITION OF STUDENT ADVOCATES, A STUDENT ORGANIZATION AT BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

Created August 2007

## **Article I: Name**

Section 1      The name of this organization shall be The Coalition of Student Advocates.

## **Article II: Purpose**

Section 1      The goals of The Coalition of Student Advocates shall be:

- A.      To encourage civic involvement among the students at Ball State University through events focusing on current political and social issues.
- B.      To organize discussions, focus groups, and events focusing on issues concerning Ball State students.
- C.      To provide an arena for networking and resource sharing (i.e. articles, websites, etc.) to Ball State students to advance their awareness and involvement in current political and social issues.

## **Article III: Members**

Section 1.      Qualifications of Membership:

- A.      Membership in The Coalition of Student Advocates shall be limited to students, faculty, and staff of Ball State University.
- B.      Membership will not be based on or refused to anyone for reasons of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or age.
- C.      No dues shall be required from the membership.
- D.      Members must attend at least two meetings per semester to maintain membership.

## **Article IV: Officers/Advisor**

Section 1.      The officers of the Executive Board and their rank within The Coalition of Student Advocates shall be:

- A.      Director
- B.      Secretary
- C.      Treasurer

Section 2.      No officer can hold more than one position at one time.

**Section 3. Election of Officers:**

- A. A quorum of half of the membership must be present to conduct elections. Officers shall be elected according to a simple majority vote of members present at the last meeting of each academic year. The term for all officers shall be one academic school year, beginning in the fall.

**Section 4. Officer Duties**

- A. The Director shall be responsible for the overall operation of The Coalition of Student Advocates. The Director shall conduct all meetings. The Director shall serve as a liaison between The Coalition of Student Advocates and Ball State University. The Director shall be responsible for all administrative details of meetings and events sponsored by The Coalition of Student Advocates.
- B. The Secretary shall handle all correspondence for The Coalition of Student Advocates. The Secretary shall maintain up-to-date records of the membership of the club. The Secretary shall be responsible for updating members on The Coalition of Student Advocates events.
- C. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the general supervision of the finances of The Coalition of Student Advocates. The Treasurer shall keep up-to-date financial records.

**Section 5. Faculty Advisor**

- A. The Coalition of Student Advocates will work closely with an advisor who is employed by Ball State University and is dedicated to promoting civic involvement. The faculty advisor is the liaison to the Office of Student Life.

## **Article V: Meetings**

**Section 1.** An executive board meeting may be called at any time by the Director.

**Section 2.** The Coalition of Student Advocates meetings shall be open to the public. The officers are expected to attend every executive and general body meeting, with the exception of three excused absences under extenuating circumstance which should be explained at the following meeting. The Coalition of Student Advocates meetings and executive board meetings shall be held only in the fall and spring semesters.

**Section 3.** The Coalition of Student Advocates meetings shall be held at least twice a month. In the case of extenuating circumstances, The Coalition of Student Advocates meetings may be conducted via conference call or e-mail.

**Section 4.** The quorum for The Coalition of Student Advocates meetings shall be one half (1/2) of the average number of members in attendance at meetings that semester.

- A. The Secretary shall keep a written tally of the number of members in attendance at each meeting for the purpose of determining the definition of quorum.

## **Article VI: Parliamentary Authority**

Section 1. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern The Coalition of Student Advocates meetings.

## **Article VII: Amendments**

Section 1. Amendments to The Coalition of Student Advocates Constitution may be proposed by:

- A. Any member of The Coalition of Student Advocates.
- B. Any officer of The Coalition of Student Advocates.
- C. Any committee formed by The Coalition of Student Advocates for the purpose of constitutional revision.

Section 2. Proposed amendments to The Coalition of Student Advocates Constitution must be submitted to The Coalition of Student Advocates executive board in writing at least one (1) executive meeting before the general body meeting in which a vote is to be taken.

Section 3. Amendments shall become a part of The Coalition of Student Advocates Constitution upon ratification by a simple majority of quorum of The Coalition of Student Advocates members at a The Coalition of Student Advocates meeting.

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS  
STUDENT LIFE

Muncie, Indiana 47306-0851  
Phone: 765-285-2621

December 7, 2007

Amber Michel  
Coalition of Student Advocates  
614 W. Beechwood Ave., Apt. 3  
Muncie, IN 47303

Dear Amber:

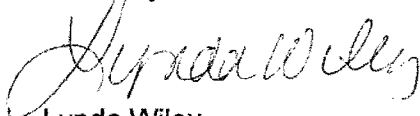
I am pleased to inform you that the constitution of your organization, Coalition of Student Advocates, has been approved by the Student Activities Committee, so the group is now officially recognized.

Enclosed is a Handbook for Student Organizations and a form to request a username for your organization. If your organization chooses to obtain an Outlook account or set up a website linked to Ball State's website, you will need to submit the Username Request Form as your first step.

All mail that arrives in this office addressed to your organization will be placed in Student Center Box 85. If, at some point, your mail is to be sent to a different on-campus address, please inform our office and we will make the appropriate changes.

If I may assist you or your organization in any way, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Lynda Wiley  
Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and  
Director of Student Life

pc: Barb Stedman, Honors College

LW:slm

Enclosures

# Campus Activities Fund Board

## REQUEST FOR FUNDING APPLICATION

Application must be typed. You can reproduce the application on a computer, just be sure to include the information requested below, answers to the questions about the event, and a proposed line-item budget. (You may request the Request for Funding Application be sent to you electronically as a Word document by emailing [smyers@bsu.edu](mailto:smyers@bsu.edu).)

### **GENERAL ORGANIZATION INFORMATION**

Organization Name: Coalition of Student Advocates

Purpose of Organization: This group encourages civic involvement through events focusing on current political and social issues and organizes discussions and events focusing on issues concerning Ball State students.

Total Number of Members: 8

Total Number of Active Members: 4

Eligibility Requirements for Membership: All Ball State students are eligible to join.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION - Student**

Student Contact Name: Amber Michel

Position Held in Organization: Director

Email Address: [michel.amber@gmail.com](mailto:michel.amber@gmail.com)

Telephone: (317) 260-6799

### **CONTACT INFORMATION – Faculty Advisor**

Faculty Advisor Name: Dr. Barb Stedman

Department: Honors College

Faculty Advisor Signature:

**PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR EVENT:**

1. Provide date and description of program, project, or activity for which funds are requested. Who? What? When? Where?

The event will take place April 12, 2008 from 10 am until 2 pm in AR 217 on Ball State's campus. We will be hosting a letter writing campaign to contact state and national representatives about important political and social issues. Some of the issues that we will be discussing are health care, education issues such as tuition tax credits, poverty, and global issues such as Darfur and "Invisible Children". The event is open to all Ball State students and we are anticipating at least 100 students in attendance. The event will open with a viewing of clips from movies with social activist themes, including documentaries of college students in advocacy. State Senator Sue Errington will give the opening address. Event participants will break into groups of 5-20 students by selecting issues to write about from a list of options. Student facilitators will lead these groups in composing the letters. Some student facilitators will act as informed authorities on some issues, including students from Students for a Sustainable Campus and Peaceworkers, among others. The students will compose a letter following a standard format. During lunch, University Computing Services will print 200 copies of each letter. During the closing address, given by Utility Campaign Organizer of the Citizens Action Coalition, Dave Menzer, students will sign and address letters to their state and federal representatives. CSA will provide students with contact information for their representatives, regardless of where the student lives. Participants will have the option of sending letters written by other groups to their representatives, depending on their interests. This way, representatives all over the country will receive letters concerning a variety of topics all from Ball State students.

2. Justification for the Request. Why is the group seeking funding from CAFB? What makes this particular program/project/activity worthy of funding?

The Coalition of Student Advocates is a newly formed student organization. This letter writing campaign is our inaugural event. As a new student organization, CSA does not have a steady source of financial support. The letter writing event will help the organization to establish itself on campus to gain membership and resources to be self-financing in future years. This program is a good candidate for CAFB funding because it is open to all Ball State students. We are promoting a general sense of civic engagement that does not endorse a particular political party or ideology. We are also promoting involvement in social issues in an innovative way by engaging students through issues that are important to them.

3. Benefits to campus community. Explain how the program will benefit the campus as a whole (i.e. how students will be impacted) and indicate the estimated number of students that your organization is hoping to attract.

Our organization is anticipating at least 100 students in attendance. We hope to accomplish this goal by visiting student organizations, explaining the project, and getting commitments of teams to attend the letter writing event. The campus community will be benefited by stimulating student's involvement in social issues and civic engagement even after the event is over. We are anticipating sending out 1,000 letters during our event which will have an impact on the students as they actively participate in the democratic process to express their views. Also, the elected officials we are contacting will gain perspective on the issues important to college students, an alarmingly silent population within the representative's constituency. Letters from Ball State students will also increase Ball State's exposure to political representatives as an institution that promotes civic engagement.. This event is the only the first event of this organization. As the Coalition of Student Advocates grows, we intend to attract more students, increasing our impact on campus, the number of issues addressed, and the letters sent out.

## **PROPOSED BUDGET:**

**Income** – Include all income which is related to the request. (Do not include anticipated funding from CAFB).

<b><u>Source(s)</u></b> – show calculations when applicable.	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
--	----------------------

SGA Co-sponsorship submitted (To Be Approved)	\$ 500.00
--	-----------

---

**TOTAL (Possible) INCOME \$ 500.00**

.....  
**Expenses** – Expenses must be reported in line-item form. Estimates must be as specific and accurate as possible. Expenses include items/services related to your event such as (but not limited to) advertising (newspaper ads, brochures, flyers, posters), food, supplies, speaker expenses such as fee, travel, meals, lodging. Item, Service – show unit cost when applicable.

<b><u>Item, Service</u></b> – show unit cost when applicable.	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
---	----------------------

Printing 1000 letters (University Computing Services)	\$ 20.00
---	----------

Pizza for 100 participants: 25 pizzas @ \$6.00 each	150.00
---	--------

Drinks for 100 participants: 6 cases @ \$6.99	42.00
---	-------

Disposable products: 100 Paper plates and napkins	10.00
---	-------

Postage: 1000 letters @ \$0.41 each	410.00
-------------------------------------	--------

Envelopes: 2 cases of 500 for \$8.99 each	20.00
---	-------

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**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$ 652.00**

.....  
**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$ 652.00**

**Subtract TOTAL (Possible) INCOME: -- \$ 500.00**

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**BALANCE REQUESTED FROM CAFB: \$ 152.00**

## Student Government Association Co-Sponsorship Guidelines

---Please retain a copy of this form for your records---

Approved  
2/26/08  
\$500

1. All co-sponsored events must begin and be held within the boundaries of Ball State University campus. Events taking place off-campus are prohibited.
2. Co-sponsored events must benefit Ball State University students, and/or the Student Government Association in some manner.
3. Student Government Association requires recognition, in all print forms, as a co-sponsor of the event. This includes but is not limited to: fliers, brochures, advertisements, and Daily News correspondence.
4. Events must be **free** of charge and open to all Ball State University students.
5. \*Requests for funds must be submitted 30 days prior to the day of the event and be accompanied by a valid Ball State University account number. Any form without an account number will be automatically denied.
6. A copy of **all** receipts and documents must be submitted to the Student Government Association no more than seven (7) days after the date of the event. Any unaccounted for funds beyond this time period must be refunded back to the Student Government Association. SGA would prefer to pay for a particular item at the beginning of your planning, opposed to reimbursing an organization. (Example: SGA pays for cupcakes for your event, instead of your organization paying and receiving reimbursement following the event.)
7. Failure to return a copy of all receipts within seven (7) days will result in a disqualification of co-sponsorship for your organization for the term of one semester.
8. Organizations will not be considered for future co-sponsorship until **all** receipts and unused funds are turned into the Treasurer of Student Government Association.
9. Student Government Association must be notified of any major changes to your planned budget. A major change would consist of an adjustment of \$50 or more in a specific area, or the allocation of new funds. This must be done within two days of the event.
10. Requested funds should not exceed \$500. Any requests for funds over the amount of \$500 must be submitted 60 days prior to the day of the event. The application will then be reviewed by the Co-Sponsorship Committee and Executive Council for approval.

- These guidelines will be enforced by the Treasurer and the Co-Sponsorship Committee of the Student Government Association.
- My organization hereby agrees with and understands all of the above Student Government Association Co-Sponsorship guidelines.

Signature

Date

### Co-Sponsorship Guidelines and Application

Co-Sponsoring Organization:

Name of Event:

Date of Event:

Contact Person 1:

Phone:

Email:

Contact Person 2:

Phone:

Email:

IUT#:

(Each organization must have a BSU account. This number may be obtained by contacting your organization's advisor.)

Please answer the following on a separate sheet (typed):

Description and purpose of the event:

Target Audience:

Estimated Attendance:

Estimated Budget:

How will this event benefit Ball State University and/or the Student Government Association:

\*Contact The Office of Student Life to establish a Ball State Account, if your organization is not currently registered.

EDUCATION REDEFINED



**Description and Purpose of the Event:**

The BSU Letter Writing Campaign is the premier event of the newly formed student organization Coalition of Student Advocates. Our intent is to promote civic engagement and political awareness by sponsoring a day long event on April 12<sup>th</sup> where students can write to politicians, business leaders, community leaders, etc and vocalize their interests and concerns. The BSU Letter Writing Campaign will be a neutral advocacy day – no one view will be promoted over another. Our intent is to educate and connect students with leaders. We will be hosting Senator Sue Errington as well as other political leaders, who will speak to issues that students may write about.

**Target Audience:**

Any student at Ball State is encouraged to attend. We would like to see every student be more civically engaged.

**Estimated Attendance:**

150 people (goal: 1000 letters)

**Estimated Budget:**

See attached.

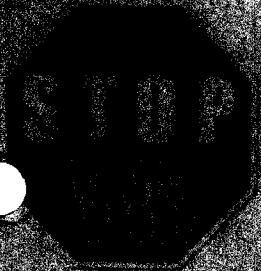
**How will this event benefit Ball State University and/or the Student Government Association:**

This event will promote the same ideas we've been learning in college and the same issues Student Government supports – being involved, being politically aware, being active citizens, etc. Ball State students will benefit by being enlightened to current political and social issues and being given a chance to address those issues by contacting leaders. Student Government Association will benefit by being promoted as the official co-sponsor in all print advertisement, emails, t shirts, and word of mouth. If Student Government would like us to advertise their organization in other ways, we would be open to suggestions. We truly feel that this event could impact the entirety of campus. We want Ball State students to feel that their opinion make a difference in the world.

## Coalition of Student Advocates Letter Writing Campaign

### List of Expenses

Printing: 1000 letters (University Computer Services)	\$20.00	
Pizza for 100 participants: 25 pizzas @ \$6.00 each	\$150.00	<del>173.88</del> 4/10
Drinks for 100 participants: 3 cases @ \$6.99 and 1 case @ \$5.99	\$27.00	} 4/23 Amber Michel = 89.92
Disposable products: 100 Paper plates and napkins	\$10.00	
Postage: 1000 letters @ \$0.41 each	\$410.00	
Envelopes: 2 cases of 500 for \$8.99 each	\$20.00	
T-shirts: Up to 12 t-shirts for event facilitators; order from Dark Star Printing	\$135.28	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$772.28</b>	



# Assembly Event and Letter Writing Campaign

Brought to you by

Committee of Students  
Associates

and  
State Government  
Association

Give the State a Voice!

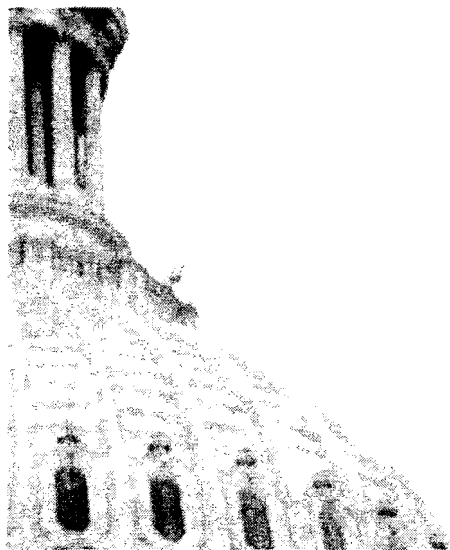
Friday, April 10, 1964  
1 pm - 4 pm  
Ballroom, Marriott Hotel  
AR 37

BSUADVOCATING









## Agenda for the day

- ⌘ Introduction
- ⌘ Special Guest Speakers
- ⌘ Letter Writing
- ⌘ Lunch
- ⌘ Address Letters

## Learn More! Get Involved!

*Looking for ways to get involved? Try looking up these websites!*

### General Advocacy

- ⌘ [www.change-congress.org](http://www.change-congress.org)
- ⌘ [www.worldadvocacy.org](http://www.worldadvocacy.org)
- ⌘ [www.vancouver.wsu.edu/fac/fountain/about.html](http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/fac/fountain/about.html)
- ⌘ [www.actionforchange.org](http://www.actionforchange.org)

### Poverty

- ⌘ [www.cititesforprogress.org](http://www.cititesforprogress.org)
- ⌘ [www.one.org](http://www.one.org)
- ⌘ [www.justharvest.com](http://www.justharvest.com)
- ⌘ [www.povertylaw.org](http://www.povertylaw.org)

### Environment

- ⌘ [www.saveourenvironment.org](http://www.saveourenvironment.org)
- ⌘ [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)
- ⌘ [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net)
- ⌘ [www.earthjustice.org](http://www.earthjustice.org)
- ⌘ [www.citact.org](http://www.citact.org)

### Diversity

- ⌘ [www.acrel.org](http://www.acrel.org)
- ⌘ [www.cir-usa.org](http://www.cir-usa.org)
- ⌘ [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)
- ⌘ [www.advocacynet.org](http://www.advocacynet.org)
- ⌘ [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)
- ⌘ [www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)

### Genocide

- ⌘ [www.standnow.org/](http://www.standnow.org/)
- ⌘ [www.hrwcalfornia.org/south/stf.htm](http://www.hrwcalfornia.org/south/stf.htm)
- ⌘ [www.genocideintervention.net/](http://www.genocideintervention.net/)
- ⌘ [www.1800genocide.com/](http://www.1800genocide.com/)
- ⌘ [www.sudandivestment.org](http://www.sudandivestment.org)

### Freedom of the Press-

### Student's Rights

- ⌘ <http://jdwilson2.iweb.bsu.edu/thesis/index.html>






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## Ways to get active at Ball State



*If you are on campus and are  
interested in staying active, why not  
check out some of these  
organizations?*



---

### Excellence In Leadership

[www.bsu.edu/eil](http://www.bsu.edu/eil)

### Asian American Student Association

[www.bsu.edu/web/aasa/](http://www.bsu.edu/web/aasa/)

### Spectrum

[www.bsu.edu/spectrum](http://www.bsu.edu/spectrum)

### Black Student Association

[bsa.iweb.bsu.edu](http://bsa.iweb.bsu.edu)

### Latino Student Union

<http://lsu.iweb.bsu.edu>

### Student Voluntary Services

[www.bsu.edu/svs/](http://www.bsu.edu/svs/)

### Students for a Sustainable Campus


<http://sustainable.iweb.bsu.edu/>

### STAND

[standbsu@hotmail.com](mailto:standbsu@hotmail.com)

### ACT

[www.displaceballstate.com](http://www.displaceballstate.com)



### Student Government Association

[www.bsu.edu/web/sga/](http://www.bsu.edu/web/sga/)

### Ball State Civil Liberties Union

[bsclu@bsu.edu](mailto:bsclu@bsu.edu)

### College Republicans

[ballstatecr@gmail.com](mailto:ballstatecr@gmail.com)

### Disabled Students In Action

[adshaw@bsu.edu](mailto:adshaw@bsu.edu)

### Peaceworkers

<http://peaceworkers.iweb.bsu.edu>

### Student Action Team


[www.bsu.edu/sat](http://www.bsu.edu/sat)

### University Democrats

[pdnelson@bsu.edu](mailto:pdnelson@bsu.edu)


### Libertarians

<http://libertarians.iweb.bsu.edu>



### Free the Slaves

[prcall@bsu.edu](mailto:prcall@bsu.edu)



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## Want to know who to write to?

*You can go online to find local and federal representatives.*

Find your State Senator and Representative

o [www.in.gov/legislative/legislators/](http://www.in.gov/legislative/legislators/)

Find your Federal Senators and Representative

o [www.senate.gov/index.htm](http://www.senate.gov/index.htm)

o [www.house.gov/](http://www.house.gov/)

CONFIDENTIAL

*Or, if you live in the Muncie area, we have done the work for you!*

---

State Senator Sue Errington

Indiana State Senate  
200 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2785

Senator Richard Lugar

306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

State Representative Dennis Tyler

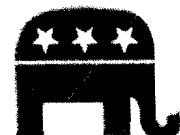
Indiana House of Representatives  
200 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2786

Congressman Mike Pence

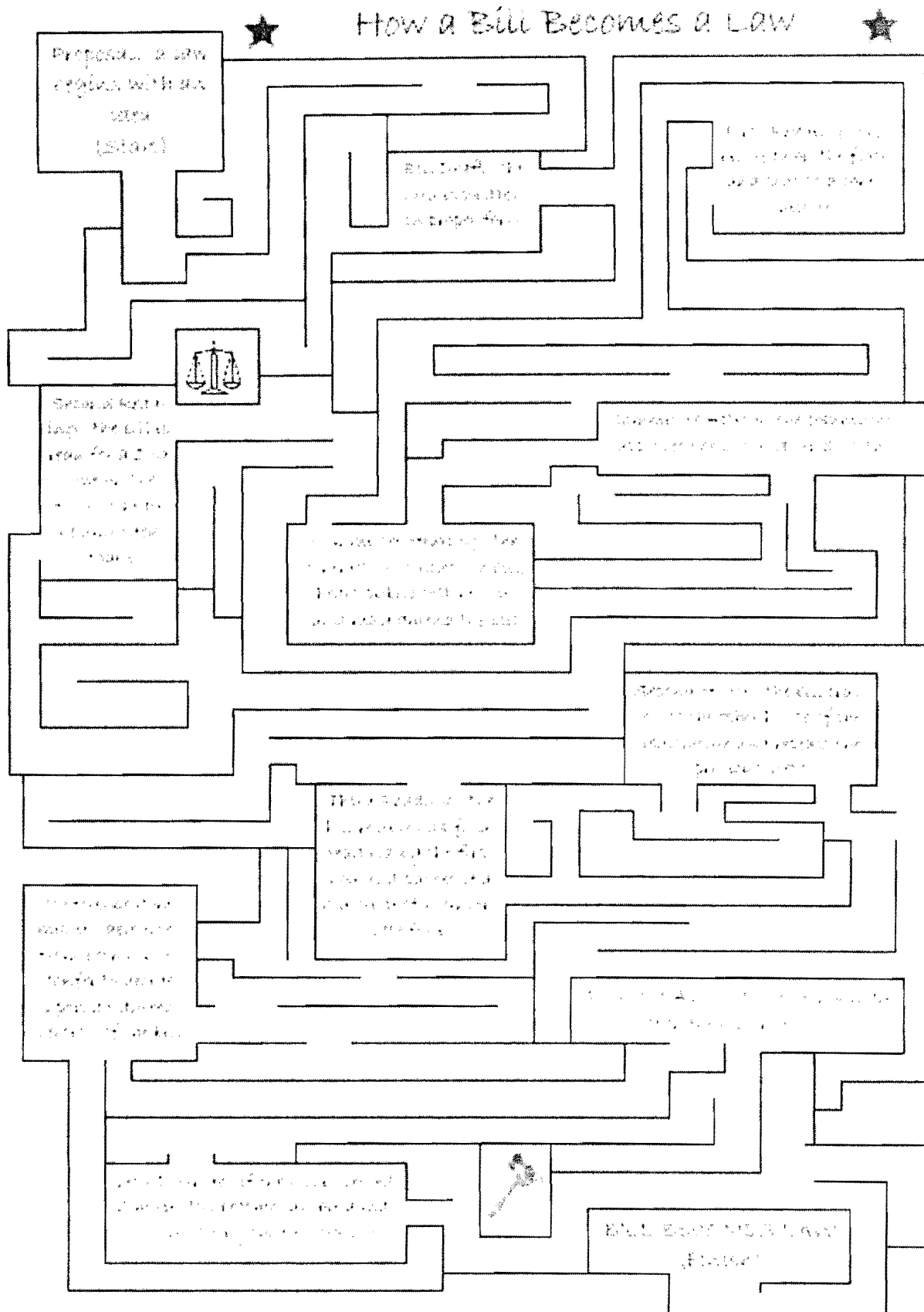
1317 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Evan Bayh

131 Russell Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510



# How a Bill Becomes a Law



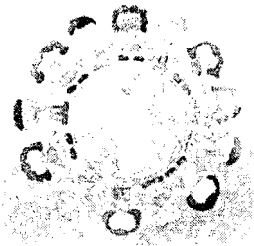
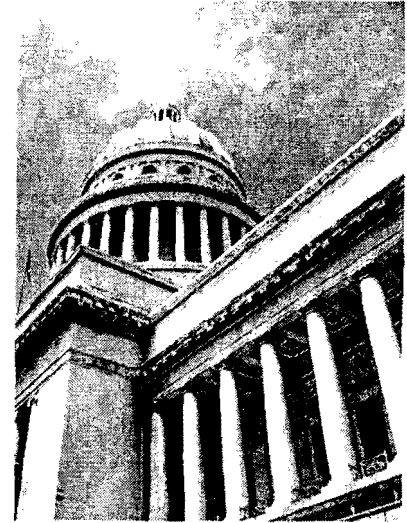


# What does it mean to be an advocate?

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Advocacy is the act of arguing on behalf of a particular issue, idea, person or animal. An advocate is someone who does this. In a political context, an advocacy group is an organized collection of people who seek to influence political decisions and policy, without seeking election to public office.

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## How do I become an advocate?

### ∞ **Connect with your community!**

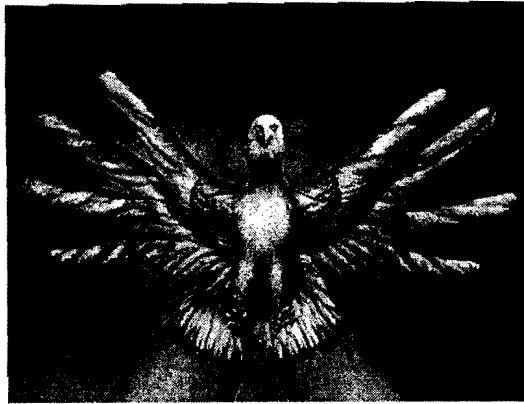
Get involved with community groups and organizations such as this letter writing campaign. Talk with your neighbors and other people you know. If you find someone who expresses frustration with the system, you have found a person who needs help.

### ∞ **Practice your skills!**

You need to be comfortable taking a stance and supporting your position when faced with pressure and officials. You need to feel comfortable being a voice for others. Join an organization with other passionate advocates to learn how to present the topic and major arguments to support it. Join the debate or speech team, student government, or other such public speaking organization.

### ∞ **Volunteer!**

The best way to gain experience as an advocate is to volunteer in your community. Often the mere presence of another like-minded person is enough support to give someone an opportunity to voice his or her concerns.



## Special thanks to...

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- ∞ Dr. Barb Stedman, Advisor
- ∞ Our Guest Speakers
  - ∞ Congressman Mike Pence
  - ∞ State Senator Sue Errington
  - ∞ David Menzer, Citizens Action Coalition
- ∞ Senator Richard Lugar for supplying resources
- ∞ Student Facilitators
  - ∞ Jacque Wilson
  - ∞ Alyce Householter
  - ∞ Amanda Glad
  - ∞ David Spooner
  - ∞ Stephanie Carter
  - ∞ Zac Davis
  - ∞ Nadia Roumie
- ∞ Student Volunteers
  - ∞ Chris French, Tech Guy/Photographer
  - ∞ Rob Burgess, Letter Editor
- ∞ ALL OF OUR PARTICIPANTS FOR FIGHTING APATHY!!
- ∞ Starbucks

## Coalition of Student Advocates Letter Writing Campaign

### EPIC Letter Format for Student Facilitators

From <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=1359>

1. **ENGAGE** your member of Congress with the topic. Start the letter with:
  - a. A personal story
  - b. A personal connection to the topic
  - c. A compelling fact or statistic
2. Outline the **PROBLEM**
  - a. Hit 'em with facts
  - b. Give the basic problem and the reason why it hasn't been solved yet (what's standing in the way of a solution?)
3. **INFORM** about the solution
  - a. State simply and clearly what needs to be done to solve the problem
  - b. Use past successes of similar issues to demonstrate the solution's effectiveness
  - c. Paint a picture of how things will improve with the given solution
4. Give the **CALL TO ACTION**
  - a. State the specific action you want the member of Congress to take
  - b. Describe the legislation you would like them to support or policy you'd like them to adopt
5. Be sure to include contact information at the end of your letter so your member of Congress can reply to you. Participants will write their contact information on the letter.

Sample Letter

Senator Sue Errington  
Indiana State Senate  
200 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2785

April 12, 2008

Dear

As a mother of two small children, I was shocked to find out that over 100 million primary school-aged children are not in school.

Can it be that the only thing standing in the way of these children having access to a brighter future are school fees often as little as \$50 a year? I've recently learned that the number one barrier for poor, vulnerable and orphaned children in getting an education is school fees.

How can we expect any country to develop to its full potential when its children are not getting educated? Not one developed country has been able to do so without first making education free and compulsory for its children.

When school fees were dropped in Kenya over 1.2 million new children showed up for school.

Please become an initial cosponsor of H.R.1406, legislation calling for the elimination of school fees with a \$250 million incentive fund for countries to draw upon to help defray the costs of hiring new teachers, building new schools and providing all children with a quality education. I look forward to your reply on this issue.

Sincerely,

Ball State University Student

[INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION AFTER PRINTING]

# Diversity Fact Sheet

**Leader: Zac Davis**

## Workplace Diversity:

Three in 10 people in this country identifies themselves as non-whites. (Census 2000)

Hispanics/Latinos became the largest minority group in 16 metro areas in the 1990s. 14 percent of this group holds positions in managerial or professional occupations, compared with 33% of non-Hispanic Whites. (Census 2000)

Women who are dissatisfied with their jobs are three times as likely as those who are satisfied to mention lack of respect as the biggest problem facing women at work. (AFL-CIO)

Approximately 10% of the general population is gay/lesbian. (Greenfield Research & Kinsey Report)

During this decade, 85% of new workers will be women, non-whites, and immigrants. (WorkingWomanNetwork)

Source: [www.simmalieberman.com/articles/diversityfacts.html](http://www.simmalieberman.com/articles/diversityfacts.html)

## Facts about Diversity in America (2001)

(Maryland Leadership Workshops – MLW)

There are 250 million Americans

12% are African American

8% are Hispanic

2% are Asian American

2% are Jewish

Average salaries of college educated . . .

White males = **\$40,000**

Black females = **\$20,000**

In 1980, the starting salary of a . . .

Female college graduate = \$15,000

Male high school dropout = \$16,000

**95%** of executive management positions in the United states are held by white males.

One year after divorce, men experience a *42% improvement* in their post-divorce standard of living, while women experience a *73% decline*.

More than **90%** of Americans identify themselves as belonging to a religious group in a poll conducted by the City University of New York.

Baptist 19%  
Lutheran 5%  
Methodist 8%  
Roman Catholic 26%  
Jewish 1.8%  
Moslem 0.5%

There are **353,827 people** who are 65 and older living in the Washington area.

16.4%, or 58,013 are working full- or part-time jobs.

People in the Washington area *living in poverty*:

**17 and under** 7.7%

18 to 64 5.5%

**65 to 74** 6.9%

**75 and over** 10.9%

Source: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/studentaffairs/pdf/sa/resources/diversity/workshop/factsheet.pdf>

## Top Twenty Religions in the United States, 2001 (self-identification, ARIS)

Religion	1990 Est. Adult Pop.	2001 Est. ADULT Pop.	2004 Est. Total Pop.	% of U.S. Pop., 2000	% Change 1990 - 2000
Christianity	151,225,000	159,030,000	224,437,959	76.5%	+5%
Nonreligious/Secular	13,116,000	27,539,000	38,865,604	13.2%	+110%
Judaism	3,137,000	2,831,000	3,995,371	1.3%	-10%
Islam	527,000	1,104,000	1,558,068	0.5%	+109%
Buddhism	401,000	1,082,000	1,527,019	0.5%	+170%
Agnostic	1,186,000	991,000	1,398,592	0.5%	-16%
Atheist		902,000	1,272,986	0.4%	
Hinduism	227,000	766,000	1,081,051	0.4%	+237%
Unitarian Universalist	502,000	629,000	887,703	0.3%	+25%
Wiccan/Pagan/Druid		307,000	433,267	0.1%	
Spiritualist		116,000	163,710	0.05%	
Native American Religion	47,000	103,000	145,363	0.05%	+119%

Diversity Fact Sheet 3  
Coalition of Student Advocates 2008

Baha'i	28,000	84,000	118,549	0.04%	+200%
New Age	20,000	68,000	95,968	0.03%	+240%
Sikhism	13,000	57,000	80,444	0.03%	+338%
Scientology	45,000	55,000	77,621	0.02%	+22%
Humanist	29,000	49,000	69,153	0.02%	+69%
Deity (Deist)	6,000	49,000	69,153	0.02%	+717%
Taoist	23,000	40,000	56,452	0.02%	+74%
Eckankar	18,000	26,000	36,694	0.01%	+44%

## Top Ten ORGANIZED Religions in the United States, 2001

(self-identification, ARIS)

*[Nonreligious, Atheist, Agnostic have been dropped from this list.]*

Religion	2001 Est. Adult Pop.	2004 Est. Total Pop.	% of U.S. Pop., 2001
Christianity	159,030,000	224,437,959	76.5%
Judaism	2,831,000	3,995,371	1.3%
Islam	1,104,000	1,558,068	0.5%
Buddhism	1,082,000	1,527,019	0.5%
Hinduism	766,000	1,081,051	0.4%
Unitarian Universalist	629,000	887,703	0.3%
Wiccan/Pagan/Druid	307,000	433,267	0.1%
Spiritualist	116,000	163,710	0.05%
Native American Religion	103,000	145,363	0.05%
Baha'i	84,000	118,549	0.04%

Source: [http://www.adherents.com/rel\\_USA.html#religions](http://www.adherents.com/rel_USA.html#religions)

**Table 672. Money Income of Families—Number and Distribution by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2005**

[Households as of **March of the following year.** (77,418 represents 77,418,000). Based on Current Population Survey (CPS); see text, Sections 1 and 13, and Appendix III. The 2006 CPS allowed respondents to choose more than one race. Data represent persons who selected this race group only and excludes persons reporting more than one race. See also comments on race in the text for Section 1]

Income interval	Number (1,000)					Percent distribution				
	All races	White alone	Black alone	Asian alone	Hispanic <sup>1</sup>	All races	White alone	Black alone	Asian alone	Hispanic <sup>1</sup>
<b>All families <sup>1</sup> . . . . .</b>	<b>77,418</b>	<b>63,414</b>	<b>9,051</b>	<b>3,208</b>	<b>9,868</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Under \$10,000 . . . . .	4,055	2,552	1,202	147	812	5.2	4.0	13.3	4.6	8.2
\$10,000 to \$14,999 . . . . .	2,890	2,024	652	105	636	3.7	3.2	7.2	3.3	6.4
\$15,000 to \$19,999 . . . . .	3,709	2,726	751	138	805	4.8	4.3	8.3	4.3	8.2
\$20,000 to \$24,999 . . . . .	4,056	3,154	666	110	807	5.2	5.0	7.4	3.4	8.2
\$25,000 to \$29,999 . . . . .	4,113	3,242	621	126	712	5.3	5.1	6.9	3.9	7.2
\$30,000 to \$34,999 . . . . .	4,183	3,417	579	100	790	5.4	5.4	6.4	3.1	8.0
\$35,000 to \$39,999 . . . . .	3,813	3,114	486	121	612	4.9	4.9	5.4	3.8	6.2
\$40,000 to \$44,999 . . . . .	3,844	3,197	451	108	580	5.0	5.0	5.0	3.4	5.9
\$45,000 to \$49,999 . . . . .	3,644	3,018	394	147	521	4.7	4.8	4.4	4.6	5.3
\$50,000 to \$59,999 . . . . .	6,693	5,572	711	269	864	8.6	8.8	7.9	8.4	8.8
\$60,000 to \$74,999 . . . . .	9,061	7,744	777	363	938	11.7	12.2	8.6	11.3	9.5
\$75,000 to \$84,999 . . . . .	4,861	4,180	398	184	409	6.3	6.6	4.4	5.7	4.1
\$85,000 to \$99,999 . . . . .	5,610	4,770	437	276	464	7.2	7.5	4.8	8.6	4.7
\$100,000 to \$149,999 . . . .	10,327	8,983	646	532	626	13.3	14.2	7.1	16.6	6.3
\$150,000 to \$199,999 . . . .	3,457	2,987	178	255	178	4.5	4.7	2.0	7.9	1.8
\$200,000 to \$249,999 . . . .	1,355	1,190	39	110	68	1.8	1.9	0.4	3.4	0.7
\$250,000 and above . . . . .	1,747	1,546	65	116	46	2.3	2.4	0.7	3.6	0.5

<sup>1</sup> Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Report*, P60-231; and Internet site at <[http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032006/faminc/new07\\_000.htm](http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032006/faminc/new07_000.htm)> (released 29 August 2006).



**USA STATISTICS IN BRIEF - Sex, Age and Region**

<b>2007 table number</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
17	Resident population (1,000)	281,425	287,985	290,850	293,657	296,410
11	Male (1,000)	138,056	141,542	143,058	144,535	146,000
11	Female (1,000)	143,368	146,442	147,792	149,121	150,411
11	Under 5 years old (1,000)	19,176	19,537	19,778	20,061	20,304
11	5 to 17 years old (1,000)	53,119	53,325	53,269	53,198	53,166
11	18 to 44 years old (1,000)	112,184	112,979	113,210	113,373	113,313
11	45 to 64 years old (1,000)	61,954	66,555	68,640	70,693	72,838
11	65 years old and over (1,000)	34,992	35,589	35,952	36,333	36,790
17	Northeast (1,000)	53,595	54,192	54,427	54,582	54,642
17	Midwest (1,000)	64,395	65,097	65,410	65,694	65,972
17	South (1,000)	100,236	103,195	104,553	105,994	107,505
17	West (1,000)	63,199	65,502	66,461	67,387	68,291
	Percent of population--	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
11	Male	49.1	49.1	49.2	49.2	49.3
11	Female	50.9	50.9	50.8	50.8	50.7
11	Under 5 years old	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8
11	5 to 17 years old	18.9	18.5	18.3	18.1	17.9
11	18 to 44 years old	39.9	39.2	38.9	38.6	38.2
11	45 to 64 years old	22.0	23.1	23.6	24.1	24.6
11	65 years old and over	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4
17	Northeast	19.0	18.8	18.7	18.6	18.4
17	Midwest	22.9	22.6	22.5	22.4	22.3
17	South	35.6	35.8	35.9	36.1	36.3
17	West	22.5	22.7	22.9	22.9	23.0

### Our Resources

- It takes 1,400 pounds of water to produce one pound of food.
- More than 25 million acres of arable and pasture land, the source of 98 percent of the world's food, are critically degraded and abandoned each year.
- The Earth's limited supply of natural resources will only be able to sustain 2 billion humans by 2100, bad news for a world that already feeds 5.9 billion.
- The world's total population will reach six billion by mid-1999. --Reuters.
- Farm animals consume nearly half the world's cereal produce. Growing grain to feed animals to turn them into meat is an inefficient business- an acre of cereals can produce five times more protein than an acre devoted to meat production.
- The United States makes up less than 5 percent of the total population on earth. Yet, we currently consume over 30 percent of all the resources.
- For the \$25 it might cost to insulate the average 12-window, two-door house, you could save 10 percent or more of your yearly heating bill.
- If every gas-heated home were properly caulked and weather-stripped, enough natural gas would be saved each year to heat another 4 million homes.
- Simple heavy drapes attached to windows with a valance could save about \$10 per window in heating costs each winter.
- "The Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that more than half of the wetlands that existed in colonial times --about 100 million acres-- have been destroyed, with many thousands of more lost each year." -- Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer, New Wetlands Guidelines, New Openings.
- Water system regulations and drainage for agriculture and urban development have been the major cause of loss of over 50 percent of the wetlands in countries all over the world including the USA, New Zealand, Australia, Pakistan, Thailand, Niger, Chad, Tanzania, India, Vietnam, and Italy. -- ENN
- Organic farming can save up to 50% of energy, according to studies. Using manure can save 80% of the energy consumed by using synthetic fertilizers.

### Our Pollution

- Americans use approximately 2.2 billion pounds of pesticides every year. Research shows that target pests will eventually develop resistance to these pesticides anyway.
- Seventy-three different kinds of pesticides have been found in groundwater, which is potential drinking water.
- More than 100 active pesticide ingredients are suspected of causing cancer, birth defects, and gene mutation.
- A growing list of pesticides have the potential to disrupt the immune and endocrine systems and of having long term impacts on the offspring of exposed humans and animals.
- The cost of one nuclear weapons test alone could finance the installation of eighty thousand hand pumps, giving third world villages access to clean water.
- Estimated costs of cleaning up the 24,000 contaminated federal nuclear facilities range from \$100 billion to \$400 billion. (The Environmental Protection Agency)
- Each year U.S. factories spew 3 million tons of toxic chemicals into the air, land, and water. That compounds the over one-half billion tons of solid hazardous wastes - we're not talking about your garbage here - that get dumped across the nation for our generation to one day clean up. (The Gale Environmental Scorecard)
- In 1987, the U.S. released 1.2 million tons of toxic chemicals into our atmosphere, 670,000 tons into our soil, and 250,000 tons into our water. (International Wildlife magazine)
- PCB's haven't been used in the U.S. for more than two decades. But dangerous levels of PCB's remain in the natural environment and pose a threat to human health. --ENN for 5/27/98
- "Everyone has some amount of dioxin in his or her body, and the average level is already high enough to endanger health." --Lois Gibbs
- Nitrogen is essential to crops but too much will leak into groundwater and rivers causing nutrient pollution in rivers and oceans and severe human health problems from nitrate pollution.

- In the US, 41% of all insecticides are used on corn. Eighty per cent of these are used to treat a pest that could be controlled simply by rotating the corn for one year with any other crop.

#### Our Climate

- 1997 was the warmest year on record. Global warming is now happening faster than at any time in the last 10,000 years, and the 10 warmest years on record have been experienced during the last two decades.
- Scientists agree the most likely cause is pollution of the Earth's atmosphere with greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, oil, and gas to produce energy and fuel automobiles.
- Higher temperatures cause water volume to expand. In the case of the world's oceans, the effects are visible in rising sea levels (10-25 centimeters, on average, this century). Sea-level rise can in turn have a negative impact on coastal erosion and flooding of low-lying areas, cause greater storm damage, make coral reefs more vulnerable, affect salinity and ecosystems in mangroves and wetlands and cause more pollution from land to drain into the ocean.
- Higher temperatures are melting glaciers and polar ice, altering arctic and Antarctic habitats and further endangering species like the polar bear, walrus, whales, coral reefs, migrating birds, nearly all forms of life, as well as adding to sea level rise.
- The Pacific Ocean west of California has warmed by 1.5 degrees Celsius, which has triggered declines of zooplankton and the disappearance of an estimated 4 million sea birds.
- The Northeast states have experienced the warmest January through June period since climate records were first kept in 1895. --ENN 7/7/98
- The Bering Glacier in Alaska has shrunk by 10-12 km in length during the last century, losing 130sq km in area
- Human activities are causing some greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, to build up in the atmosphere. Whenever we burn fossil fuels (gasoline, oil, coal or natural gas), more carbon dioxide is emitted to the atmosphere. Forest destruction and agriculture also release greenhouse gases.
- Since the industrial revolution, CO2 gases emitted into the atmosphere have increased by 27%. Another greenhouse gas, methane, has more than doubled.
- If we do not act to reduce our emissions of these heat-trapping gases, it is predicted that global temperature could rise 2° to 6° F in the next 100 years. Just a few degrees' difference in the global average temperature can mean a major climate change.

## Poverty Facts

- The most recent poverty data shows that the official poverty rate in 2004 was 12.7 percent, up from 12.5 percent in 2003 and 37 million people were in poverty, up 1.1 million from 2003.<sup>1</sup>
- For children under 18 years old, both the poverty rate and the number in poverty remained unchanged from 2003. In 2004, 13 million children or 17.8 percent were poor.
- The number of Americans in poverty has increased by 4.3 million since President Bush took office. Three times in the last Congress, the Republican leadership brought down a bill rather than let us have an up or down vote on the minimum wage -- first on the State Department Bill, then on the Welfare Bill, and finally on the Class Action Bill.
- Income inequality in the United States can also be seen through racial and ethnic boundaries. In 2004, non-Hispanic Whites had a poverty rate of 8.6 percent, while 24.7 percent of Blacks and 21.9 percent of Hispanics lived in poverty. Blacks (12.6 percent) and American Indians and Alaska Natives (11.4 percent) were the single-race groups with the highest percentage below 50 percent of their poverty thresholds.
- The minimum wage has continually decreased in value since the late 1960s; adjusting for inflation, today the real value of the minimum wage is more than \$3.50 below what it was in 1968. To have the purchasing power it had in 1968, the minimum wage would have to be \$8.70 an hour today, not \$5.15.
- The number of families in poverty increased to 7.9 million in 2004, up from 7.6 million in 2003, while their poverty rate remained unchanged at 10.2 percent in 2004.
- Children represent a disproportionate share of the poor in the United States; they are 25 percent of the total population, but 35 percent of the poor population. In 2004, 13 million children, or 17.8 percent, were poor.<sup>2</sup>
- Minimum wage employees working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, earn \$10,700 a year, \$5,000 below the poverty line for a family of three. Since the last increase in 1997, the value has eroded by more than 15 percent.

## Health Insurance

The number of people without health insurance coverage, as well as the number of people with health insurance coverage increased between 2003 and 2004.

## By Race

Black households had the lowest median income. Their 2004 median income was \$30,134, which was 62 percent of the median for non-Hispanic White households (\$48,977). Median income for Hispanic households was \$34,241 in 2004, which was 70 percent of the median

for non-Hispanic White households.

The poverty rate for all persons masks considerable variation between racial/ethnic subgroups. Poverty rates for blacks and Hispanics greatly exceed the national average. In 2004, 24.7 percent of blacks and 21.9 percent of Hispanics were poor, compared to 8.6 percent of non-Hispanic whites and 9.8 percent of Asians.

Poverty rates remained unchanged for Blacks (24.7 percent) and Hispanics (21.9 percent), rose for non-Hispanic Whites (8.6 percent in 2004, up from 8.2 percent in 2003) and decreased for Asians (9.8 percent in 2004, down from 11.8 percent in 2003).

Blacks (12.6 percent) and American Indians and Alaska Natives (11.4 percent) were the single-race groups with the highest percentage below 50 percent of their poverty thresholds.

### **By Family structure**

The number of families in poverty increased to 7.9 million in 2004. Poverty rates are highest for families headed by single women, particularly if they are black or Hispanic. In 2004, 28.4 percent of households headed by single women were poor, while 13.5 percent of households headed by single men and 5.5 percent of married-couple households lived in poverty.

The number of Americans in poverty has increased by 4.3 million since President Bush took office. Nearly 36 million people live in poverty, including 13 million children. Among full-time, year-round workers poverty has doubled since the late 1970s—from about 1.3 million then to more than 2.6 million. An unacceptably low minimum wage is a key part of the problem.

- The last time Congress voted to raise the minimum wage was in 1996. That increase raised it from \$4.25 to \$4.75 in 1996, and then in 1997 to its current \$5.15 an hour.
- Minimum wage employees working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, earn \$10,700 a year, \$5,000 below the poverty line for a family of three. Since the last increase in 1997, the value has eroded by more than 15 percent.
- Raising the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour will mean an additional \$4,370 a year to help minimum wage earners support their families. That's enough for a minimum wage family to buy

o Almost two years of child care o Full tuition for a community college degree o A year

and a half of heat and electricity o More than a year of groceries o More than 9 months of rent

- In the past eight years, Members of Congress will have raised their own pay seven times—by \$28,500. In those same eight years minimum wage workers have not gotten a single raise—they continue to earn \$10,700 a year.
- The current minimum wage fails to provide enough income to enable minimum wage workers to afford adequate housing in any area of this country.

**MICHAEL R. PENCE**  
SIXTH DISTRICT, INDIANA

**Committees**

**JUDICIARY**  
subcommittees:  
COURTS, THE INTERNET, AND  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY  
CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND  
CIVIL LIBERTIES

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
subcommittees:  
MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA --  
RANKING MEMBER

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1406**

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
1517 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3001  
FAX: (202) 225-3382

DISTRICT OFFICES  
1134 MERIDIAN PLAZA 204 SOUTH WALNUT STREET  
ANDERSON, IN 46016 MUNCIE, IN 47305  
(765) 640-2919 (765) 747-5586  
FAX: (765) 640-2922 FAX: (765) 747-5586

50 NORTH 5TH STREET  
RICHMOND, IN 47374  
(765) 962-2883  
FAX: (765) 962-3225

April 12, 2008

Jennifer Shea  
Coalition of Student Advocates  
Ball State University

Dear Jennifer and CSA participants,

Today's inaugural letter writing campaign is a great idea. I congratulate on your efforts to encourage civic involvement. I regret that my schedule prohibits me from participating in this worthwhile endeavor. You are to be commended for your desire to increase interaction between the Ball State student body and their local, state, and federal officials. The communication and distillation of ideas among elected officials and their constituents is foundational to our system of government.

I certainly join Jennifer and the Coalition of Student Advocates in encouraging each of those present to heartily engage in discussion, debate, and composition of the thoughts that you desire to share with your representatives in government. I trust this will be a genuine learning experience in the democratic process for you and a communication tool for me and others that represent you.

Warmest Regards,

Π

Mike Pence  
Member of Congress

MRP/kas

## **Utilities Thwarted Again in 2008 Legislature**

As in the 2007 legislative session, the Indiana Energy Association (IEA), the lobbying arm for Indiana's major gas and electric utility companies, pushed more unnecessary legislation designed to short circuit regulation over their business plans and profits.



The front man for utility interests in the Indiana General Assembly is Senator Brandt Hershman (Monticello). He has recklessly disregarded ratepayer concerns

since becoming chair of the Senate Utilities & Regulatory Affairs Committee.

Fortunately, utility companies have been thwarted in their efforts to gain more ready access to ratepayer wallets. This year, Representatives Dave Crooks (Washington), Russ Stilwell (Boonville), Dale Grubb (Covington) and Kreg Battles (Vincennes), joined by Senator Richard Young (Milltown), worked with CAC to gain a better understanding of utility plans to gut consumer protections in the law.

As a result, the utilities were prevented from plans to weaken regulatory oversight in order to pursue virtual automatic rate increases for speculative investments that could cost ratepayers hundreds of millions, or even billions, of dollars.

Perhaps the worst proposal was Senate Bill 224 authored by Sen. Hershman. This bill would have had ratepayers pick up research and development costs for carbon dioxide controls on coal-fired power plants. The utilities estimate this technology will not be available for 20 years, so this proposal was an open-ended blank check to foist possibly billions of dollars onto ratepayers without any positive result. As it stands now, many are skeptical that capturing and shooting carbon into the ground to keep it out of the atmosphere will ever work or be financially viable. Meanwhile, off-the-shelf technologies that can produce billions in savings for ratepayers languish because the utility industry controls the Senate Utilities & Regulatory Affairs Committee.

Ratepayers should demand from the Governor and state legislature:

- Repeal of anti-consumer provisions currently in Indiana statute;
- A five year moratorium on new coal plants;
- A statewide RES without coal or nuclear; and
- A statewide energy efficiency program to avoid the need for new base load generation.

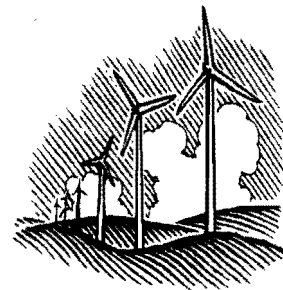
## **Renewable Energy Standard Held Hostage by Utility Interests & the Governor**

Representative Dave Crooks (Washington) has been a great advocate for a statewide Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) over the last few years. He will be missed as he has retired from the General Assembly.

Rep. Crooks filed House Bill 1102 this year to create a statewide RES. It died in committee by a vote of 8 to 3 because utilities and the Governor did not support it.

At the end of the legislative session, the issue resurfaced as Reps. Russ Stilwell (Boonville) and Dale Grubb (Covington) attempted to revive the RES with compromise language in House Bill 1117.

CAC worked for a stand alone RES without coal and nuclear being added as renewable resources. Coal ended up in the compromise proposal. CAC did not support various provisions in the compromise, including trackers and coal. To their credit, Reps. Stilwell and Grubb worked with CAC to reduce the impact of these provisions on ratepayers.



Senator Brandt Hershman's (Monticello) unwillingness to compromise was reflected in an outrageous counter-proposal that included nuclear for AEP (Indiana Michigan) and coal for Duke Energy and that further weakened regulatory oversight. He also included tracking provisions from Senate Bill 24. His actions at session's end proved that he was never serious in his support for a meaningful renewable energy market.

The utilities and the Governor are threatening Indiana's economy and health and well-being of its citizens by continuing to work against a rational energy policy for the state. The reason utility companies do not support a statewide RES is because it would save ratepayers' money, money the utilities wouldn't otherwise get their hands on. The Governor's "Homegrown Energy Plan" published a few years ago mirrors utility interests in that it marginalizes renewable resources and energy efficiency while promoting coal at all costs to ratepayers.

Please contact Senator Hershman (s7@in.gov) and Governor Daniels (mdaniels@gov.in.gov). If you are supportive of a statewide RES, please voice your disappointment and encourage a change of heart because purposefully withholding lower utility bills and cleaner air from Hoosiers is simply unethical behavior.

Please also contact Representatives Stilwell (h74@in.gov) and Grubb (h42@in.gov) and thank them for working with us to forge a healthy, sustainable and affordable energy policy for Indiana and for refusing to consider policies that place the profit-motivated interests of investor-owned utilities ahead of the interests of consumers and our state.



## Legislature Continues to Support Raw

### Coal Plant Deal for Ratepayers

In the 2007 legislative session, New York-based, power plant developer Leucadia Corporation convinced state legislators that gas ratepayers in Indiana should essentially finance a non-regulated coal gasification plant to protect Leucadia from financial risk, guaranteeing their profits from the project.



House Bill 1722, authored by Russ Stilwell (Boonville), locked ratepayers into a 30-year contract for synthetic gas being pro-

duced by the coal gasification plant once the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission approved the contract currently being negotiated between Leucadia, Vectren (Indiana Gas and Southern Indiana Gas & Electric), and NIPSCO gas (Northern Indiana Public Service Company). Citizens Gas in Indianapolis dropped out of the negotiations.

However, Leucadia hit a snag. The company could not get a 30-year coal contract in Indiana. So this year's bill, Senate Bill 223 authored by Brandt Hershman (Monticello), allowed Leucadia to import coal from out of state, contrary to the "Homegrown Energy" spin to get HB 1722 passed in 2007. SB 223 passed and has now become law.

HB 1722 and SB 223 could cost ratepayers billions, including costs incurred by the coal gasification plant for carbon dioxide regulations expected to be adopted by Congress within the next few years.

CAC has intervened in the IURC proceeding that will determine whether the final contract, sight unseen at the moment, gets approved by state regulators.

In response to HB 1722 and SB 223, Vectren customers should contact Neil Ellerbrook, CEO of Vectren and demand that Vectren drop out of the negotiations. Write Mr. Ellerbrook c/o Vectren, P.O. Box 209, Evansville, IN 47702-0209.

NIPSCO customers should contact NiSource CEO Bob Skaggs and demand that NiSource drop out of the negotiations. Write Mr. Skaggs c/o NiSource, 801 E. 86th Ave., Merrillville, IN 46410.

### Jim Rogers:

#### Poster Boy for the Utility Business Plan

Jim Rogers, CEO of Duke Energy, is traversing the country attempting to convince Congress and the public that we can address global warming by building new coal plants. Why? Because that's where Duke and its cronies make the most money.

Duke's proposed coal gasification plant at Edwardsport, Indiana is too expensive and unnecessary. Duke customers, please contact Mr. Rogers and demand that he dump his plans for a coal plant in Indiana c/o Duke Energy, PO Box 1090, Charlotte, NC 28201-1090.

## Developments at CAC

It's been a hard winter in many ways. Tornadoes in January. Temperatures fluctuating between 60 and 20 within days. Economic woes for the country. Nonetheless, CAC members have come through again with their gracious and generous support. Our canvass directors Kelly, Mary and Kerwin wish to thank you for keeping us strong and healthy.

### CAC will be addressing the following issues over the rest of 2008:

- Federal legislation that addresses carbon dioxide;
- Promoting a 5 year moratorium on coal plants;
- The AEP rate case;
- The Leucadia project in southern Indiana;
- Duke's proposed coal plant in southern Indiana;
- Continued advocacy for renewables and energy efficiency.

## Getting Involved

The public can have a profound impact on public policy issues by jumpstarting and maintaining a public dialogue on these critical issue. Here are some ideas:

### Letters to the Editor

It is important that the public be involved in state decision making on energy policy in order to make the process as open and equitable as possible. Please write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about your perspective on RES legislation, global warming, energy efficiency, clean air, the public health implications of coal-based power or renewable energy. Please visit our website ([www.citact.org](http://www.citact.org)) and that of our sister agency ([www.cacefindiana.org](http://www.cacefindiana.org)) for more information. To find the contact information for your local newspaper, please visit <http://www.usnpl.com/innews.php/>.



### Arrange Meetings with Your Legislators

E-mail or call us if you would like to arrange a meeting with your legislator in your hometown to discuss utility or energy issues.

### CAC Speakers

E-mail or call us if you would like a CAC representative to speak to a local organization or group.

## For Those Without Computer Access at Home

The local library has computers with internet access. Just go to the reference desk and you'll be surfing the Web in no time.



### State Office

603 E. Washington St., Suite 502  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Tel. (317) 205-3535  
Fax (317) 205-3599

[www.citact.org](http://www.citact.org)  
[www.cacefindiana.org](http://www.cacefindiana.org)  
[staff@citact.org](mailto:staff@citact.org)

### Northeast Office

2250 Lake Ave, Suite 110  
Fort Wayne, IN 46805  
Tel. (260) 399-1352  
Fax (260) 420-8500

## Example #2

Dear Sen. Errington:

We are parents, homeowners and business owners who support public schools and are concerned about the potential impact of tax changes on our children's future. We experienced a 60 percent increase in our property tax bill, BUT we are loathe to support any proposal that reduces our tax bill at the expense of proper support for public schools. Also, as owners of a small business, we are concerned our business property tax bill, already high, will go through the roof under current proposals.

But our immediate concern is that our children's school system, already struggling to provide quality with General Fund monies that aren't keeping up with the need, might suffer even more under some elements of the governor's original proposal.

In short, we are asking you to vote:

--YES to significant restructuring of Indiana's system of taxation with particular focus on property tax relief.

--YES to the shift from county budgets to state budget the cost of child welfare, probation and other social welfare programs.

--NO to the concept of the Circuit Breaker.

--YES to the state assuming full responsibility for K-12 Operating Budgets contingent upon -- THIS IS CRUCIAL -- sufficient assurances of full funding.

--YES to continuing to concentrate on cost reduction and efficiencies in school construction and public participation in the process, but

--NO to establishing a referendum requirement for construction of public buildings. (We already have elected school boards and remonstrance options that have worked in the past to curtail spending that a majority in a community who voted felt was excessive.)

Thanks for listening to our concerns.

## Message/letter writing guidelines

- 1 topic
- Short 1 page
- Simple, courteous, to the point
- 1<sup>st</sup> sentence: purpose of message
- Give the bill number, if you know it
- Provide information to support your position
- Include personal info – how the problem the bill addresses affects you
- Ask for something – a vote, a response
- Thank the legislator – time, effort, support
- Include your name & address

## Example #1

You are not looking out for the taxpayers of Indiana. The poor people don't pay any taxes. My business is run into the ground and I may just leave this state because of communist like you. You should be ashamed of yourself and I will stay around long enough to liquidate my failing businesses and to be sure to work very hard to let all business people ( the ones who support this state ) know that you are anti-business. When the businesses all leave, who will support the deadbeats then. Who will support you. Have you ever had a job where you actually had to perform and produce in order to get paid or have you, like the dishonorable Dennis Tyler, always been on the public dole? Stop by my office before we close the doors and talk to my starving realtors for their opinion. They are taxpayers also. I am writing this email from my hospital bed. I just had back surgery that I will have to pay for on a long term payment plan because I can't get good insurance in this state. Who pays for your insurance???

Coalition of Student Advocates Letter Writing Campaign  
Event Evaluation

**If you attended the event:**

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = poor, 10 = excellent)

- 1) Quality of guest speakers Dave Menzer and Senator Sue Errington: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Letter writing topics: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Date and time of day: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Food: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Letter writing process: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Discussion in small groups: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Quality of the letter your group produced: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Ease of letter addressing: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Handout materials: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Explanation of the event prior to the event and at the event: \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Overall experience: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate the length of the event? (Circle one)

Too long    Too short    Just right

What other topics would you like to have seen represented in the small discussion groups?

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**For everyone:**

Would you be more or less likely to attend the event next year if it were held on a weekday? (Circle one)

More likely

Less likely

About the same

Would you be more or less likely to attend the event if the letters were sent via e-mail instead of my postal mail? (Circle one)

More likely

Less Likely

About the same

What guest speakers would you like to see at the event in the future?

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What changes could be made to the event that would make you more likely to attend in the future?

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Please list any other comments or suggestions on the back. Thank you!

## Event Evaluation Results

Number of people surveyed: 23

Number of people who attended event: 15

Rate the following on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = poor, 10 = excellent)

Quality of guest speakers: 8.6

Letter writing topics: 8.6

Date and time of day: 8.4

Food: 9.1

Letter writing process: 7.6

Discussion in small groups: 7.8

Quality of letter produced: 7.7

Ease of addressing: 8.5

Handout materials: 8

Explanation of the event prior to the event and at the event: 7.5

Overall experience: 8.5

Length (14 responses)

Too long: 14% (2)

Too short: 36% (5)

Just right: 50% (7)

Topic suggestions

Women's rights

More specific issues

Animal rights

Gender equity

Workers' rights

Welfare/social security

Not student rights

Would you be more or less likely to attend the event if it were held on a weekday?  
(23 responses)

More likely: 35% (8)

Less likely: 30% (7)

About the same: 35% (8)

Would you be more or less likely to attend the event if the letters were sent via e-mail  
instead of by postal mail? (23 responses)

More likely: 17% (4)

Less likely: 22% (5)

About the same: 61% (14)

What guest speakers would you like to see in the future?

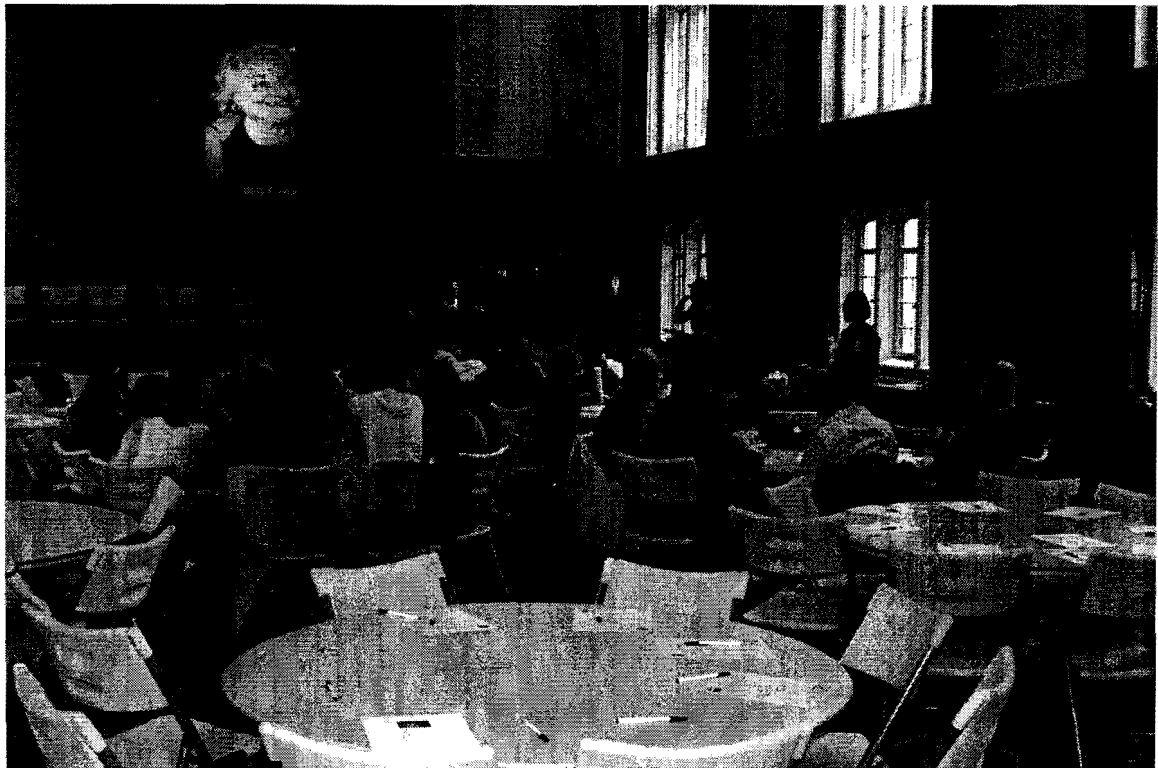
- Dave Menzer
- Evan Bayh
- Richard Lugar
- JoAnn Gora
- A member of Congress
- Governor
- Speakers talking about more topics
- Local/state activists
- Spiritual gurus
- Authors, political advocates
- BSU administrators
- Environmental speakers
- Rhetorician

What changes would you like to see made to the event?

- More time for letter writing (3 responses)
- Held during the week (2 responses)
- More preparation before the event with information about the event (2 responses)
- Shorter event (2 responses)
- More fun/exciting event
- Longer event
- More in-depth presentation of issues
- Federal Senator or Congressional leader
- Print letters on colored paper and add artistic flair to the letters
- Held in the evening
- Send e-mails to representatives
- More events
- Set up a booth on campus
- Better explanation of the writing process and the topics so participants and do research before the event.



Event Coordinators with guest speakers Dave Menzer and Senator Sue Errington



Letter-writing groups